

The Quiet Hour.

The Fall of Jericho.

S. S. LESSON Joshua: 12-20. Oct. 19, 1902.

GOLDEN TEXT.—Heb. 11: 30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.

Early in the morning, v. 12. God is pleased to see us take up the duties He has assigned to us not only in faith and with submission to His wise will, but also with alacrity and promptness. How unworthy of His condescension in pointing out our tasks and the grace He has offered to give for the performance of them, is the tardiness and even unwillingness with which we turn to unpleasant or painful and difficult tasks. We are slow to learn the lesson of the Psalmist prophet who said, "Lo, I come . . . I delight to do thy will, O my God," Ps 45: 7.

The seven priests bearing the seven trumpets of rams' horns, v. 13. The means appointed were utterly inadequate and disproportionate to the end aimed at. Their efficacy lay alone in that they were appointed by that God who makes no mistakes, and who has often in the history of human affairs the more revealed His glory by choosing the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. In His hands a Moses influences human history more than did all the dynasties of Egypt and Assyria. He chooses a few fishermen of Galilee and they triumph "over all the might of kings and rulers; over all the influence of priesthoods and systems of worship enshrined in the traditions of centuries; over all the learning and intellect of the philosopher, and over all the prejudices and passions of the multitude." It still pleases Him by the "foolishness of preaching" to save them that believe. Those who announce His gospel are in themselves as weak and their preaching oftentimes appears as foolish and useless as the blast of a ram's horn before the ramparts of Jericho. And yet the same old miracle repeats itself, for the battlements of injustice and oppression and sin go down before the proclamation of God's judgments, and sinners become alarmed and listen to the trumpet of the everlasting gospel of the grace of God proclaiming liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison door to them that are bound.

The armed men went before them, v. 13. God has marvellous modes of preparing His way and making straight His paths. Not once, but often in history, not in ancient times alone, but frequently in the last two centuries, has He allowed armies and fleets to be the pioneers of the evangelist and missionary. He makes the very wrath of man to praise Him. It would appear that the Boxer uprising and the invasion of China by the allied armies is already being used by God for the speedier and more complete awakening of China to its need of the Gospel. Similarly the famine has spoken to India of its need of the Bread of Life. What is needed now is more missionaries—more consecrated servants of the Lord to follow, blowing upon the Gospel trumpets and bearing the ark of the testimony.

Only on that day they compassed the city seven times, v. 15. The silent marching of the six days were trying enough to faith and patience. This of seven times round the city at one stretch was more try-

ing still. But God has always some wise end to serve when he keeps us waiting. Let us rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him; in the end God's hand will be unmistakably manifested in the salvation of His people.

Shout; for the Lord hath given you the city, v. 16. No matter what our toil or planning may have been, the success of it belongs to God who giveth us the victory in life and over death. The victory of God's people comes ever and anon in some new advance of God's kingdom in the world, some new truth revealed or apprehended, some victory of light over darkness, of righteousness over sin, of Christ over Satan. Every partial victory is an occasion for rejoicing and a presage and earnest of the final and crowning success.

Only Rahab shall live, she and all that are with her in the house, v. 17. God often shows mercy to a whole household for the sake of one faithful member. Even the humblest and unworthiest of those who cast in their lot with His people and aid in His work, even to so slight an extent as the gift of a cup of cold water, shall in no wise lose their reward.

Every man straight before him, v. 20. In the great circuit of the hosts of evil by the forces of righteousness God places each man in the circumstances in life which determine his individual duty as to where he must resist and what he is bound to attack. What God requires is that every man so placed shall go straight before him, shall do the duty that is plainest and lies nearest to him and to do it with his might.

Self-Mastery.

Topic for October 19.

I Cor. 6: 25; Gal. 5: 16-26. Temperance Meeting.

It is a splendid thing to see a man who is master of a city. A well governed city is a beautiful object. Its streets are clean and nicely paved. Its schools are wisely taught, and all the children are in them, nor are they crowded. Its police are polite and honorable. Its laws are strictly enforced. Beauty and honor reign everywhere. Peace and safety are its citizens. The poor are contented, because they may become wealthy. The wealthy are happy, because they help the poor. The city moves as a whole to virtuous deeds, because at the head is one brave and true hearted man, who knows his business, and with single energy devotes himself to it.

But he that rules his spirit is greater than he that rules a city. Indeed, the spirit-ruling must come before the city-ruling, or the ruling of anything else.

If it is beautiful to see clean streets in a town, it is far more beautiful to see the clean frank eye that speaks of a clean frank soul. If it is fine to inspect a well-arranged school system, it is still finer to talk with a man whose every word shows forth a well ordered mind. If it is good to walk through a city where the streets are safe and peaceful because the police are brave and the judges are true, it is even better to know a man of righteous ways, whose paths are peace.

The world raises monuments to the masters of cities, the Napoleons with their Pari-

ses, the Cromwells with their Londons, the Cæsars with their Romes the Fredericks with their Berlins; but these monuments will all decay, and the whirlwind of eternity will leave no atom of them unless at the same time they are monuments to men who were masters of the city, of the soul. Such a master you may be without commanding an army or being elected to an office, and the way to it lies along the path of temperance.

Joseph Parker says, "Men are only injured by themselves." And so if we make it certain that we shall not harm ourselves, we shall make it certain that we shall never receive any harm at all.

The struggle for self mastery would be a hopeless one if we had to fight it all at once. But it is gained by little victories at a time, and every new victory gives us fresh strength for greater victories in the future.

Christ spent his forty days of temptation in the wilderness in fasting, and doubtless in prayer. It was this self-mastery of His that enabled him to master the devil's temptations as they came.

Christ bade all His disciples leave all and follow Him. He knew that the only way to master all is to leave all. It is those that Christ masters that alone can master themselves. It is those that have mastered themselves that alone can master others.

When David had struck down Goliath, he finished his work by cutting off the giant's head. That is what we must do with our sins. We must not knock them down on one occasion, and allow them to spring up for another time. As soon as we get them under our feet, we must decapitate them.

There was once a little fellow who made a great discovery one day. He went to his mother with delight, and said, "Mamma, I don't have to cry when I fall down. I can make myself stop. I can just say, 'Stop that!' and then I make me mind me." That child had found the secret of self mastery. He had learned to "make me mind me."

No one is master of himself until he is master of the whole of himself. A man is not master of an automobile if he can steer it, but cannot control the electricity or the gas that drives it. And in the same manner no man is master of himself if he can control his muscles and cannot control his temper; or if he can control his temper and cannot control his appetite. Let no one dare to be satisfied so long as any part of himself is out of his control.

Drinking is like a fire on a ship. It is not long before the ship is out of control. The fire gets into the engine room, and no steam can be made. It gets at the wheel, and the ship cannot be steered. It eats holes in the side, and the water rushes in and the ship sinks to the bottom. A man's life is moved by his will and governed by his conscience. Strong drink is the fire that rapidly and surely destroys both conscience and will, and leaves only a blackened hulk, drifting on life's sea.

Paul says that those that are Christ's have crucified the flesh. Have we yet applied that test to ourselves? Have we nailed our lower natures to the cross, and so separated ourselves from them, and got rid of them forever? Crucifying was the most painful of deaths, and it is not without pain that one can crucify his lower nature. Has our Christian life been altogether easy and smooth and free from pain? Then we may be sure that we have not attained to self-mastery.